



The Muslim Sunrise

In the Light of Surah-Fatihah

*Christianity Today
and the Coming of the Promised Messiah (as)*

The Nature of the Quranic Teachings

Understanding the Islamic Principle of Submission

The Concept of Jihad in Islam

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WORLDWIDE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the expected world Reformer and the Promised Messiah. The community is an embodiment of true practice of the religion of Islam. It seeks to unite mankind with its Creator, and to establish peace throughout the world. It is actively engaged in dissemination of the message of Islam. It endeavors to exert a constructive influence through social projects, educational institutions, and health services. It emphasises the urgent need of tolerance, equality and universal brotherhood. The present Supreme Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV.

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The Muslim Sunrise is the official Journal of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, USA, Inc. The magazine is open for discussion on Islam as well as topics relating to other religions. It highlights the role of Islam in a changing environment. It provides a platform for public opinion on current issues and their solution. Opinions expressed in the magazine may not necessarily be those of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam.

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EDITORIAL

During Christmas weekend last year, an Air France jetliner was hijacked by four young Algerian terrorists. This incident was just one of several such hijacking incidents that have taken place in the last decade. Fortunately, in the interest of pursuing friendlier ties with Muslim nations throughout the world, the United States government was careful to avoid equating this terrorist incident with the religion of Islam. As staff writer Thomas W. Lippmann reported in the December 28, 1994 issue of the *Washington Post*, State Department spokesman Michael McCurry took great care in not linking the hijacking incident with Islam. Lippman also quotes U.S. President Clinton as saying, "I have tried to do a lot as I have traveled the world...to say to the American people and to the West generally that even though we have had problems with terrorism coming out of the Middle East, it is not inherently related to Islam -- not to the religion, not to the culture."

President Clinton should be congratulated on taking a first step in making it clear that terrorist acts should not be ascribed to the religion of Islam. This enunciation of U.S. policy is encouraging, in light of the tendency to link the Islamic concept of *jihad* to terrorist activity. To be sure, many terrorist organizations have twisted the Islamic concept of *jihad* for their own sociopolitical gain, often fueling the ever-growing misconception that *jihad* is merely the Islamic way to justify terrorist action.

The idea that Islam condones violence is unfounded. In Chapter 2, verse 257 of the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, it is written: "There is no compulsion in religion". Islam, far from condoning terrorist activity, categorically rejects all forms of violence, and further argues that freedoms of both faith and conscience are universal rights accorded to all human beings. The concept of *jihad*, as outlined by the Qur'an, seeks to preserve rather than to destroy such freedoms.

The issue of *The Muslim Sunrise* features an article which defines the Islamic concept of *jihad* and presents verses from the Qur'an which serve to dictate how Muslims across the world practice their faith in a peaceful manner. It is unfortunate that many people in the world today, claiming to represent one religion or another, instigate violent terrorist activities that claim hundreds of lives. In light of such activities, representatives of the media must be careful not to take the religious claims of such terrorists at face value, as this can lead to profound misconceptions about religious world-view.

Arshad M. Khan

A PASSAGE FROM THE HOLY QURAN

Allah had promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors *from among* those who were before them; and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that He will surely give them in exchange security and peace after their fear: They will worship Me, and they will not associate anything with Me. Then who so is ungrateful after that, they will be the rebellious.

(Sura Al-Nur, Verse 56)

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَا يُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ
وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي
وَلَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

Commentary:

The present verse embodies a promise that Muslims will be vouchsafed both spiritual and temporal leadership. The promise is made to the whole Muslim nation but the institution of *Khilafat* will take a palpable form in the person of certain individuals who will be the Prophet's Successors and the representatives of the whole nation. They will be, as it were, *Khilafat* personified. The verse further says that the fulfilment of this promise will depend on the Muslims' observing the Prayer and giving the *Zakat* and on their obeying the Messenger of God in all religious and temporal matters concerning the nation. When they will have fulfilled these conditions, the boon of *Khilafat* will be bestowed upon them and they will be made the leaders of nations; their state of fear will give place to a condition of safety and security, Islam will reign supreme in the world, and above all the Oneness and Unity of God—the real purpose and object of Islam — will become firmly established.

The promise of the establishment of *Khilafat* is clear and unmistakable. As the Holy Prophet is now humanity's sole guide for all time, his *Khilafat* must continue to exist in one form or another in the world till the end of time, all other *Khilafats* having ceased to exist. This is among many others the Holy Prophet's distinct superiority over all other Prophets and Messengers of God. Our age has witnessed his greatest spiritual Khalifain the person of Ahmad, the Promised Messiah.

The Qur'an has mentioned three kinds of *Khalifas*:

(1) *Khalifas*, who are Prophets such as Adam and David. About Adam, God says in the Qur'an: "I am about to place a vicegerent in the earth" (2:31); and about David He says: "O David, We have made thee a vicegerent in the earth" (38:27).

(2) Prophets who are the *Khalifas* of another and a greater Prophet such as the Isrealite Prophets who all were the *Khalifas* of Moses. About them the Qur'an says: "We have sent down the Torah wherein was guidance and light. By it did the Prophets who were obedient to Us judge for the Jews:" (5:45).

(3) Non-Prophet *Khalifas* of a Prophet, with or without temporal powers, such as godly people learned in the Law. Their mission is to protect and preserve the law from being tampered with (5:45).

Briefly, the verse under comment covers all these categories of *Khalifas*, viz., the Holy Prophet's rightly-guided *Khalifas*, the Promised Messiah, his Successors and the spiritual Reformers or *Mujaddids*. Their mission, as the above verse says, is to protect the Law and to bring back "the erring flock into the Master's fold."

The special marks and characteristics of these *Khalifas* are:

(a) They are appointed *Khalifas* through God's own decree in the sense that the hearts of believers become inclined towards them and they voluntarily accept them as their *Khalifas*;

(b) the religion which their mission is to serve becomes firmly established through their prayers and missionary efforts;

(c) they enjoy equanimity and peace of mind amidst hardships, privations or persecution which nothing can disturb; and

(d) they worship God alone, i.e. in the discharge of their great responsibilities they fear no one and they carry on their duties undaunted and without being discouraged or dismayed by the difficulties that stand in their way.

The verse may also be regarded as embodying a prophecy which was made at a time when Islam was very weak and idols were being worshipped throughout Arabia and the Muslims being small in number

feared for their very lives, and yet in the course of only a generation the prophecy was literally fulfilled. Idolatry disappeared from Arabia and Islam became firmly established not only in Arabia but also reigned supreme in the whole world and the followers of the Holy Prophet, erstwhile regarded as the dregs and scum of humanity, became the leaders and teachers of nations.

The words, "Whosoever is ungrateful after that, they will be the rebellious," signify that *Khilafat* is a great Divine blessing. Without it there can be no solidarity, cohesion and unity among Muslims and therefore they can make no real progress without it. If Muslims do not show proper appreciation of *Khilafat* by giving unstinted support and obedience to their *Khalifas* they will forfeit this great Divine boon and in addition will draw the displeasure of God upon themselves.

(The Holy Quran with English Translation and Commentary, Vol. 4, pp. 1869-1870.)

A SAYING OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD

(peace be on him)

It is related on the authority of Abu Haraira that the Holy Prophet said, "On the day of resurrection, the seven persons will be under the shadow of God; the first, the judge who is just; the second, the man who devotes his life in the worship of God even in his youth; the third, the man who eagerly awaits the call to the prayer to go to the Mosque and worship God; fourth, the two friends, who love each other for the sake of God, when they meet they meet for the sake of God, when they separate they separate for the sake of God; fifth, the man who resists the temptation of a woman who is beautiful and comes of a respectable family and tries to incline him towards her for evil purposes; the sixth, the man who gives alms with his right hand but conceals it from the left; the seventh, the man, when alone, meditates on God, and his eyes become filled with tears." (Bukhari)

IN THE LIGHT OF SURAH FATIHAH

by

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as)
Imam Mahdi and the Promised Messiah

1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds,

3. The Gracious, the Merciful,

4. Master of the Day of Judgement.

5. Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone do we implore for help.

6. Guide us in the right path —

7. The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings, those who have not incurred Thy displeasure, and those who have not gone astray.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ②
 الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ③
 مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ④
 إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ⑤
 اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ⑥
 صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ⑦ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ
 عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ⑧

How can there be an occasion for war when no one is interdicted from fasting and prayer and pilgrimage and payment of *zakat* nor from chastity and piety; nor has any disbeliever drawn his sword to force the Muslims to renounce their faith or to cut them into pieces. Justice demands that sword should be raised only to meet the sword and pen to counter pen. Today we grieve over the falsehoods that tongues and pens have broadcast. By means of falsehoods have the Books of Allah been maligned and their truths been covered up. The mansion of the Muslim people was attacked and demolished and it became like a town with its battlements breached, or like an orchard with its plants burnt out, or like a garden with its fruits and flowers destroyed and its buds plucked and scattered, or like a country that was once prosperous whose streams have now run dry, or like fortified castles now ruined with not a vestige left, the vandals having shattered them to bits. It began to be said about the Muslim people that it had perished, and the announcers pronounced its obituary and its story was told and the publishers gave it due publicity.

But every tide must ebb and every rise has a decline. As is well known when a flood reaches a firm mountain it halts; and when night approaches daybreak its darkness is dissipated as Allah, the Supreme, has said: Witness the night when it approaches its end, and witness the dawn when it begins to spread (81.18-19). Allah has made the break of dawn a necessary corollary of the extreme darkness of night. Similarly in His command: Earth, swallow up thy waters (11.45) He has made the height of the flood a sign of its decline. Accordingly, Allah resolved to restore to the believing Muslims the days of their earlier glory and to show them that He is their Lord and that He is *Rahman* (Gracious) and *Rahim* (Compassionate) and Master of the Day of Requital, the day when the dead will be raised. You are certainly witnessing the *Rabubiyyat* (Providence) of Allah, the Bountiful, during this period and His graciousness for men and beasts in the physical sphere. You see how He has provided new means and beneficial resources. Industries and manufactures abound, the like of which was not known in the past, and wonders unparalleled in the earlier ages. You find a novelty in everything that concerns a voyager or a resident, a native or a stranger, a healthy person or a sick person, a belligerent or a forbearing peace-loving one, enjoyable things or hardships, as if the world has indeed undergone a total change. Doubtless all that is the manifestation of His Supreme Providence (*Rabubiyyat*) and pure Graciousness (*Rahmaniyyat*). In the same way you witness this *Rabubiyyat* (Providence) and *Rahmaniyyat* (Graciousness) and *Rahimiyyat* (Compassion) in the sphere of religion. All these matters have been facilitated for the seekers of the knowledge of the Divine and the work of propagation and dissemination of spiritual sciences has been made universally easy and signs have been sent down for those who worship Allah and seek tranquillity from the Presence of the Supreme Being. The sun and the moon were eclipsed in the month of Ramadhan (in 1894) and camels have been discarded as a means of rapid transport, except in rare instances, and you will in a short while see new means of transport on the Mecca-Medina road. The learned and the learners have been helped with abundance of books and many means of acquiring knowledge; mosques are frequented and worshippers are protected and ways of peace and propagation of the faith have been opened up. All this is the grace of *Rahimiyyat* (Compassion). We are bound to testify that these facilities and amenities had no parallel in the past ages, that no ear had heard of their like nor had any eye seen their equal. Mark well then this *Rahimiyyat* of our Sublime Lord. It is due to His *Rahimiyyat* that we can now publish a whole lot of books on our religion in the space of days which our predecessors could not do in years; and today we are able to get news of the farthest parts of the earth in hours which our fore-runners could not have obtained except after years of hardships and effort. Verily, the gates of *Rabubiyyat* and *Rahmaniyyat* and *Rahimiyyat* have been opened wide for us for gathering every kind of good and the ways towards it have been multiplied to

such a degree that it is beyond the power of man to compute them. When did such facilities ever exist for our predecessors, preachers and callers to Islam? Verily the earth has been given a good shaking for our benefit until it has disgorged its hidden treasures. Canals have been dug and rivers have dried up and new means of transport have been invented and camels have been discarded. Our forerunners did not see the bounties that we have seen and at every step there is a new bounty, so much so that they are beyond counting. With all this the hardening and death of hearts have become widespread, as if all men had died and there was not left aught of spiritual insight in them, except in a very few of him whose number is negligible because of its smallness. We have realized through these bright manifestations of the attributes of *Rabubiyyat* (Providence), *Rahmaniyyat* (Graciousness) and *Rahimiyyat* (Compassion) which are like portents and by the multiplicity of deaths by the poison of misguidance that the Day of gathering and resurrection is certainly nigh, nay, is at the door, as has become manifest from the appearance of these facilities and signs. Verily *Rububiyyat*, *Rahmaniyyat* and *Rahimiyyat* are billowing like the waves of the oceans and are manifesting themselves continuously, running like mighty rivers. Thus there is not the least doubt that the hour of gathering and of resurrection has arrived. This is the way of Allah, and it has manifested itself in the time of the Companions in the choicest of all creation, the Holy Prophet of Islam. Nor is there any doubt about its being the Day of Requital and the Day of Master and the Day of the total Lordship of the Lord of Heavens and of the manifestation of its signs in the hearts of the dwellers of the earth. There is no doubt also that this day is the day of the Messiah, the Judge appointed by Allah, the Best of judges, and verily it is the resurrection after the death of mankind and its parallel truly appeared in the time of Jesus and in the time of the Seal of the Prophets. Reflect hard then and be not one of the heedless.

(Ijazul Masih, pp. 136-160).

CHRISTIANITY TODAY AND THE COMING OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV

(From the book "Christianity: A Journey from Facts to Fiction".)

The greatest problem which confronts the world of Christianity today is not lack of understanding as much as the lack of desire and will to accept truth. Christianity, whether it is mythical or factual, has become an inseparable part of Western civilization and has played an important role in their colonization and imperial conquests. It supports their political and economic systems and provides them with a unifying and coherent force that keeps them as one powerful and unified entity. It has played a vital role in building and cementing the complex socio-political and economic system of the West. What we understand by Western civilization or Western imperialism and its economic domination has all been pervaded with some Christian elements. In its present state, Christianity seems to be more inclined to serve material cause of the West better than its spiritual cause, while in the past its role was more in the direction of supporting Christian beliefs and building moral values.

The most historic role played by Christianity, however, lies in building and enhancing Western imperialism. The conquest of the Orient was done with Christian fervour. In particular the battles fought with the Muslim empire were strongly motivated by the Christian hatred of Islam.

Christianity and Colonialism

When colonial rule subjugated almost the entire continent of Africa and tied them crown to toe in the chains of political bondage, they did not have to wait long until they were bound hand and foot in the chains of economic slavery as well. Imperial conquests are meaningless without an economic subjugation of the people. Not far behind the political and economic lords came the Christian priests, robed in humility and self-sacrifice. Their purpose to visit Africa appeared to be diametrically opposed to that of their political and economic vanguard. They came not to enslave, so they said, but to liberate the souls of Africa. It is surprising why the Africans did not question this purportedly noble intention.

Why did they not respectfully enquire of the benign philanthropic leaders of the Church, as to why should they take pity on their souls and their souls alone? Could they not see how mercilessly their bodies had been enslaved? How wantonly had they been robbed of their political freedom? How they were bound in the chains of economic slavery? Why did they not take pity on their physical state of captivity and why were they only interested in liberating the souls of an enslaved people?

The inherent contradiction is obvious, but alas it was not so obvious to those who fell prey to the Christian designs. Africa is naive indeed, and as much naive today as it was two hundred years ago. Africans still do not see the perpetration of their political and economic slavery through the invisible, remote controlled system of neo-colonialism. They still do not realize that for them Christianity is only a means of subjugation. It is like an opiate that has lulled them into a deep sleep of forgetfulness. It gives them a false sense of belonging to their rulers in sharing at least something on equal footings with them. It is the same sense of belonging which has led them to imitate the so expensive style of Western life. The trees remain planted on foreign soils, but only the fruits are transported across to a people who have somehow become addicted to its taste. This is a small illustration of how Christianity has always been indispensable for the Western imperial and economic domination of the Third World.

In the West itself, regardless of whether a common man understands the complexities of Christian dogma or not, he sees Christianity as an integral part of his culture and civilization. It should be remembered that the real strength of Christian values wherever they survive, does not lie in its mythical set of beliefs. But instead it lies in its emphasis on kindness, sympathy and service to the cause of suffering and other such values that have almost become synonymous with Christianity. Although these values are common to all religions of the world and they seem to be the goal, Divinely set to be attained by all humanity, yet somehow, the powerful Christian propaganda continuously emphasises these roles in relation to Christianity alone and, as such, has succeeded in convincing people at large. This message of sympathy, kindness, godliness and gentle behavior, plays magic with its mellow music. It is this world of romance which generally attracts people to the Christian faith. However, side by side, yet divorced from it operate the hard, political and economic realities of Western life and its subjugation of the rest of the world.

It seems that the dogmatic paradoxes that the Christians have to live with, have somehow been transferred into their worldly behaviour as well. Kindness, humility, tolerance, sacrifice and many other such

noble words go hand in hand with cruelty, suppression, gross injustice and large scale subjugation of the defenseless peoples of the world. Rule of law, justice and fair play seem only to be valid currencies operable internally in the Western cultures. In the areas of international relationships however, they are treated as stupid and obsolete terms to be taken seriously only by the naive. International politics, diplomacy and economic relationships know no justice other than that which serves the national interest. Christian values are not permitted to step across into the domain of Western politics and economy. This is the most tragic contradiction of the modern times.

When it comes to the image that it projects, Christianity is only presented in the form of an attractive Western culture and civilization calling the world or the Orient to a life of comfortable carefree permissiveness in comparison to the generally rigid codes of their decadent religious societies. This message of emancipation is largely misunderstood by the semi-literate masses of the Third World as something very attractive. Add to this the additional psychological advantage of acquiring a sense of belonging to the advanced world through the commonness of religion and then one begins to recognize the true role of Christianity in attracting in large numbers the down-trodden and, in many cases, outcast and oppressed people who are at the lowest rungs within their own class-ridden societies. It is beyond their scope to understand Christian dogma. It only serves as lifting their human status, but only spuriously so.

From the above it should become evident that the Christianity we are talking about is so distant from the Christianity of Jesus Christ. To conceive of Western culture as Christianity is a manifest error. To attribute the current forms of Christianity, in its various spheres, to Christ is indeed an insult to him. There are exceptions of course to every rule. No statement is applicable in absolute totality to any group of large numbers. No doubt, there is a small number of individual islands of hope and life in the Christian world where Christian sincerity, love and sacrifice are genuinely practised. These are the islands of hope around which rage oceans of immorality that are slowly and gradually corroding and finally claiming more edges of these islands. Had the Christian world not been bejewelled with such shining examples of Christianity practised in the spirit of Jesus Christ, however far and few between, a total darkness would envelope the Western horizon. Without Christianity there is no light in the Western civilization, but, alas, that light is also fast fading.

It is essential for the Christian world to return to the reality of Christ and to cure themselves of their split identity and inherent hypocrisy.

To continue to live in a world of myths and legends is potent with grave perils. The main purpose of this exercise is to awaken the Christian world to the potential dangers attendant upon the widening parallax between their belief and practice. Myths are fine as long as they serve the purpose of subjugating the lowest rungs of a society to the hierarchy of a system which controls them and exploits their ignorance by keeping them doped. But when it comes to the beliefs playing a vital role in bringing a dead people to life and reconstructing their fast degenerating moral values, then such myths are of no avail. They are mere fantasies and fantasies can never play a meaningful role in human affairs.

The Re-Advent of Jesus Christ.

The application of the observations made so far can now be demonstrated. The vital question of the survival of humanity today revolves around the central image of Jesus Christ. It is highly essential, therefore, to understand his reality. What was he and what role did he play in the first instance as Christ in the decadent society of Judaism? How seriously can we take the promise of his second advent in the latter days? These are the vital questions we must address.

If the image of Jesus Christ is not real and is only a product of human imagination, then it is impossible to visualize his re-advent. It is so because Jesus was not a product of fantasy; he was a real man and only as such could he be reborn as a human child and not descend as a phantom revisiting mortals. Such fantasies never visit the realities of human life and a people who live with myths and legends, continue to do so without there ever being a chance for them to recognize their redeemer if and when he comes.

If Jesus was actually the 'Son' of God, as the Christians would have us believe, then of course he would return in glory, resting his hands on the shoulders of real angels. But if this is merely a romantic fantasy of Christian hopes and aspirations then, as such, this incident will never happen. Never shall the world see this bizarre event of some god descending from heaven in a human form along with a troop of angels supporting him and singing his hymns.

The very idea is repulsive to human logic and human conscience. It is the wildest fairy tale that was ever invented to lull the faculties of a people. On the other hand if the Ahmadiyya understanding of Jesus Christ is accepted, it would replace this fantastic scenario with one which is not only acceptable to human understanding, but is also

powerfully supported by the entire religious history of mankind. In that case we would be expecting a saviour no different from the Christ of the first advent. We would be expecting a humble man, born of humble origins like the Jesus Christ of the first advent, to begin his ministry in the same style as he once did. He would belong to a religious people resembling the Jews of Judea, both in their character and circumstances. They would not only reject and disown him at his claim to be the Promised Reformer, which they were expecting as their redeemer from God, but would also do all that lay within their powers to annihilate him. He would re-live the life of Christ all over again and would be treated with the same contempt, hatred and arrogance. He would suffer once again, not at the hands of his own people, but at the hands of similar hostile forces which opposed him before. He would also suffer at the hands of the supreme foreign imperial power under whose canopy he would be born among an enslaved people.

P.D. Ouspensky, a prominent Russian journalist of the early twentieth century, writing on the subject of the re-advent of Jesus Christ shared almost the same view.

It is by no means a new idea that Christ, if born on earth later, not only could not be the head of the Christian Church, but probably would not even belong to it, and in the most brilliant periods of the might and power of the Church would most certainly have been declared a heretic and burned at the stake. Even in our more enlightened times, when the Christian Churches, if they have not lost their anti-Christian features, have at any rate begun to conceal them, Christ could have lived without suffering the persecution of the 'scribes and Pharisees' perhaps on somewhere in a Russian hermitage.¹

This is the only real process by which all divine messengers and reformers are raised. Any concept other than this is hollow, spurious and meaningless.

It always happens that at a time when prophetic fulfillment of divine reformers takes place, the people for whose redemption they are sent fail to recognize them. In that period of history they have already transformed the image of their reformer from reality to fantasy. They begin to expect a fantasy to appear and materialize, while what happens is merely a re-enacting of the religious history as it invariably occurred from the time of the first divine reformer. They always appear as humble human beings born of human mothers and during their lifetime are always treated as humans. It is much later after their death that a process

1 P.D. Ouspensky, 'A New Model of the Universe,' p 149-150, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubener & Co., Ltd 1938

of their deification begins. As such, their smooth acceptance during their re-visit becomes impossible.

When such religious people are confronted with the realities of divine reformers, who always appear as ordinary humble human beings, they get rejected outright. When one is expecting a fairy to come or a phantom to materialize, how can one accept the coming of an ordinary human instead? That is the reason why the world failed to see and recognize the second advent of Jesus Christ that has already taken place.

A tall claim perhaps, which is more likely to be simply rejected by most readers. How could Jesus have come and gone without the world having taken a serious note of it? How could he have gone unnoticed by the entire world of Christianity and Islam? The modern times have seen many such claimants who even created momentary stirrs and storms in many a cup, but where are they today? It is an age where in many countries, cults erupt like mushrooms and bizarre claims of Jesus having returned or having sent his forerunner are made sporadically. This claim could perhaps be just one of those. Why should any serious minded person waste his time to even contemplate this? Certainly, serious doubts would be created and a grave dilemma would indeed be faced. We seek to indulge the reader's attention by requesting him to visualize a situation where Christ would actually have come. Is his revisit just a fantasy or can he really revisit the world in person or through proxy? This is a question which has to be resolved before we can attempt to answer the various doubts mentioned above.

Is the world, be it Christian or Muslim, really in a psychological state of mind to accept the second advent of Jesus? If so, in what form and in which way? When seen from the vantage point of both Muslims and the Christians, Jesus, if he were to ever return, would come with such glory and clear signs, descending from the heaven in broad daylight with angels supporting him, that it would be impossible for even the most sceptical to refuse to accept him.

Sadly, only a Jesus of fantasy is acceptable to the world of today, a Jesus the like of which never came before in the entire human history. If religious history is to be taken seriously, one finds scores of instances where founders of religions or other divines are reported to have ascended to heaven bodily. These claims are so numerous and widespread that it seems to be a universal trend of man to concoct such stories in order to elevate and superhumanize their religious leaders. The question is how can we deny all these reportings which are accepted and believed by perhaps billions of people in the world today? The Christians and Muslims alone who believe in this and other similar bizarre events

number beyond two billion. So a reader may enquire as to what, we or anyone else in the world has to reject all such beliefs as unreal and imaginary. We agree that examining it from this angle will require a ponderous exercise to refute such claims as being unsupported by the scriptures of the religions which entertain them. Once being led into this maze of possible and alternative interpretations, it ends up only as a question of preferences and choices. It then becomes anybody's game to interpret scriptures or reported religious history as literal or metaphorical. To step into this quagmire of conflicting explanations would serve no purpose. Yet there is one exit from this onerous exercise that we can show the readers and invite them to follow or reject as they please.

For argument's sake let us accept all such claims of religious leaders having ascended to heaven and take them at their face value. If the case of Jesus Christ's reported ascent is to be treated in a superficial sense and his second coming to be interpreted as literal and real then there is no reason why we should refuse to accept other similar cases in the world. Why make the exception of Elijah, King of Salem or the Twelfth Imam of the Shiite faction in Islam or the ascension of Hindu Gods or other similar holy men and the so-called personifications of God? It is safer, therefore, to avoid entering into such unproductive, futile debates with those who entertain similar beliefs. One may enquire from all such credulous believers in fantasy, if they can point out a single revisit, in person, of those who are reported to have disappeared by ascending into remote heavenly recesses. Can the entire human history present a single example of the bodily return of any person to this world who is reported to have bodily ascended? Show us if there is one.

Looking at the total absence of literal fulfilment of such claims one is left with two choices. Either to reject such claims as fraudulent or accept them only metaphorically, as Jesus did in the case of Elijah's second coming. It becomes evident from this that those who await Jesus' literal descent from heaven have created a barrier between themselves and the reality of Jesus. If Jesus comes again he will come only as a human being just like all the expected divine reformers before him. If he appears today as an ordinary humble person, having been born in a land similar to the land of Judea in Palestine and commissioned to play the same role he played during his first advent, will the people of that land treat him in a manner other than he was treated before?

The Promised Messiah

Such is the case of the second advent of the Messiah in whom we believe. It happened just over a hundred years ago that a humble man of God, by the name of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian was informed by

God that Jesus of Nazareth, Son of Mary, whose literal second coming is being awaited both by the Christians and the Muslims alike, was a special prophet of God who passed away like all other prophets of God. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad declared that Jesus was not bodily alive and was never bodily lifted to any heavenly space to await his revisit to this earth. He had died like all other prophets of God and was no more than a prophet. The second advent of Jesus Christ, a belief common to Christians and Muslims alike, was to take place spiritually and not literally. As such, he was told by God that God had raised him in the fulfillment of that prophecy.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad belonged to a noble family of the Punjab. His family pursuits were mostly concerned with building the family's fortune and honour, but he distanced himself from wordly pursuits and spent most of his time in the worship of God and religious studies. He was a man almost lost to the world, little known even in the small township of his birth. Then slowly he began to emerge on the religious horizon of India as a stalwart and a champion of the cause of Islam. He became known as a holy man of such fame that he commanded respect not only among Muslims but also from the followers of other religions. People began to witness in him a man in communion with God; whose prayers were answered; whose deep sincere concern for humanity and the suffering of people was beyond question.

Islam, during this period in India was unfortunately in a most pitiful state. It was targeted by the Christian missionaries, who in accordance with the policies of the British Empire, launched a vitriolic campaign not only against Islamic teachings but also against the Holy Founder of Islam. Also, in Hinduism, the major religion of India, extremely ambitious movements were taking form with a two pronged plan. To revive Hindu culture and practice and to eliminate Islam and the Muslims from India, portraying them as aliens having no right to remain rooted on its soil. The most aggressive among them was the Arya Samaj Movement, which was founded by Pandit Swami Dyanand Sarsooti (1824-1883) in 1875. This perhaps further motivated Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to begin extensive research in comparative religions in defense of Islam.

His studies further strengthened his belief in the superiority of the teachings of Islam. He was impressed by the distinctive approach of the Quran to human problems. The Quran, he discovered, after presenting a course of human conduct did not stop at that instruction arbitrarily, but continued to build strong, logical arguments supported by evidence that the prescribed course was the most appropriate option in the given context.

It enabled him, at last, to champion the cause of Islam, which at that time was practically defenseless. Thus he performed the most pressing requirement for the defense of Islam in India at that period. He began his public life by holding dialogues and debates on a smaller scale which gradually expanded into much wider circles. His fame as the most competent and formidable proponent for the cause of Islam began to spread far and wide.

It was in that period of time that he commenced the authoring of one of the greatest literary religious works that he ever undertook. This book, *Brahin-e-Ahmadiyya*, was planned to be published in fifty volumes but he could only publish the first five while tumultuous events overtook him and from then on it was no longer possible for him to pursue that scholarly task to its conclusion. However, subsequently he authored many other books in response to the dictates of the time. His books covered almost the entire subject which he had originally intended to cover and much more. In fact he did more than fulfil his promise though not under the title. It is amazing how he could produce such vast literature almost single handed, without much clerical help. The books, epistles and treatises which he authored numbered around one hundred and ten. It was not just his literary works that won him such wide recognition in the entire Sub-Continent but also his spiritual qualities played a vital role in winning him wide-scale fame and respect.

In this twilight of his rising and widening reputation he was commissioned by God to bear the grave responsibility of reformer of the latter days as expected and awaited by almost all religions of the world. From the Muslims point of view he was the *Almahdi*, the divinely guided reformer. From the view point of both the Christians and the Muslims he was raised to the status of the Promised Messiah to fulfil the prophecies of the second advent of Jesus Christ. However, this appointment cost him all the fame and popularity that he had earned previously. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the divinely appointed spiritual reformer of the age was abandoned forthwith and rejected not only by the followers of other faiths but more strongly so by the Muslims of India themselves, the people whose cause he had been so competently and vehemently pleading.

It was practically a new spiritual birth for him. As he had come alone to the world so he was to start a new life as a single man in the world of religion, practically abandoned by all around him. But God did not abandon him. He was repeatedly assured by God's succour and support through different revelations that he received during the period of intense hostility: A warner came into the world but was not accepted, but God will accept him and will establish his truth with mighty signs.' At

another time he was revealed: 'I shall spread thy message to the ends of the earth.

These are some of the early revelations which sustained him during the state of utter desolation and rejection he suffered at the hands of his opponents. More than a hundred years have passed since and the picture that has slowly but steadily emerged, fully supports his claims and prophecies and the truth of his revelations

That one man has grown into ten million people all over the world in a hundred and thirty four countries spread over five continents. His message has reached the corners of the earth, from the farthest west to the remotest east. He is accepted as the Promised Guided Leader and the Promised Messiah of the second advent in the Americas, in Europe, in Africa, in Asia and even in the distant islands of the southeast Pacific, such as Fiji, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands etc. Despite this, his followers, can best be described as a small pool insignificant in volume, as compared to the large sea of the Christian world.

The achievements of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's Movement would require an account too lengthy for the small space available here but it is essential to note that no other religious movement in the modern times has progressed and spread so rapidly with such a firm step. It is not a cult, nor is it a popular craze. It is a serious message - an uphill task which requires great effort and discipline on the part of those who venture to follow it. Those who follow it do so by accepting grave responsibilities that are to be discharged throughout their lives. It is almost as austere as the early Essene society. To Accept accept Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's claim as the Promised Messiah is not hobnobbing with romance but is a commitment of a lifetime. Those who get initiated in his Community have to deny most of the vain pleasures of their lives, yet not in the style of the ascetics and the hermits, but with deep conviction, commitment, satisfaction and contentment of heart that enables them to sacrifice and perservere in his cause to a high degree of excellence. He has created a world-wide community which has no equal in financial sacrifices. Where all earning member of the Community commit themselves to pay at least a sixteenth of their income towards the noble cause. The spirit of voluntary sacrifice and the amount of voluntary labour which is performed throughout the world is mind boggling. Yet all this is done without the least coercion of any type. Those who are able to put in their share of labour or financial offerings consider themselves fortunate to be able to do so.

This is a community that is entirely independent in its financial affairs. This universal system of voluntary contribution is being exercised

for the last hundred years with remarkable purity and moral integrity. Therein lies the secret of its success in maintaining its independence from outside influences for over a century. That however, is only one angle of observation. Looking at the quality of his followers from other angles provides no less a fascinating scenario. It is a community which stands out in its moral and peaceful co-existence, mutual love and deep respect for human values. It is a religious community that is highly admired the world over for its respect of law and regard for decent human relationships irrespective of religion colour or creed.

To a reader it may seem that we have outstepped into a tract which has no relationship to the subject of our address. Let us most respectfully point out that such an observer has missed the point. The relevance of this discussion can be better understood in the light of a profound observation of Jesus Christ that a tree is recognized by its fruit.¹

If anyone today is seriously interested in determining the bona fides of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's claim, this is the best and the most dependable criterion. On this criterion it can be judged whether he is indeed that Promised Messiah whose advent had been foretold not only by Jesus Christ himself but also by the Holy Founder of Islam. To discover what manner of followers he had been able to produce and what the passage of a century has done to them would be a very rewarding exercise. The question would also arise if they have been treated by the age in a manner similar to the followers of Jesus Christ in the first century of Christianity?: Again the question must arise as to what was the attitude of God towards him in the face of the many attempts that were made to annihilate and exterminate him and his Community? Has the attitude of God been in favour of, or has it been against such a hunted community? Like the early Christians, have the followers of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad also experienced the same pressing support of God against all odds? If whenever they were ground through the mill of persecution, instead of being pulverised they emerged on the other end even larger than before and more powerful and more respected, then of course the claim of such a claimant cannot be trivially waived. It is no longer a tall claim of a mad man, or a fanciful cobweb of a day dreamer's imagination. Ahmadiyyat has become a reality to be taken seriously on a much wider horizon than Christianity could ever be taken towards the end of its first century.

Here is the case of a Messiah who was a fact of history and not the product of fiction, and here again is the case of a Messiah whose re-

I make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. (Matt 12:33)

advent was as realistic as was his first appearance as a commissioned divine leader. It is entirely up to the people of this age to choose to live continuously in a world of legends and fantasies and to keep eternally awaiting the promised reformers of their religions and creeds or to accept the hard realities of this life. On one thing we must agree, that many a religious leader has been elevated from the common human ranks to that of the ranks of deities. Many a time, religious leaders have been imagined to have ascended to heaven to await somewhere in the empty recesses of space for their second visit to the planet earth. There is no reason why one should accept one of such claims and reject another, because they are merely claims, without any positive, scientific proof to support their validity. Hence there is no option but to either accept them all or to reject them in their entirety. This would be the only honest and just course of action. One thing however is certain, that once departed from their terrestrial existence, regardless of the manner in which their followers believed them to have departed, never in the entire history of mankind has anyone ever revisited the Earth. Again, one thing is most certain that all such divines and spiritual leaders who have been elevated to the status of deities or partners of God, began their lives like ordinary humble human beings and lived until their deaths the life of a human. It were only their followers who turned them into gods. But remember, that none of them ever demonstrated his role in the running of nature. There has always been only One hand which seems to govern the laws of nature. The mirror of the heavens and the laws of nature at every level reflect the face of one God and one God alone. The Holy Quran says:

They allege: The Gracious one has taken unto Himself a son. Assuredly, you have uttered a monstrous thing! The heavens might well-nigh burst thereat, and the earth cleave asunder, and the mountains fall down to pieces, because they ascribe a son to the Gracious One; whereas it becomes not the Gracious One to take unto Himself a son. (19:89-93)

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا ۖ

لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِدًّا ۖ

تَكَادُ السَّمُوتُ يَنْفَطَرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ وَ

تَخْجَرُ الْجِبَالُ خَجًّا ۖ

أَنْ دَعَا لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدًا ۖ

وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا ۖ

THE NATURE OF THE QURANIC TEACHINGS

Hazrat Muhammad Zafrullah Khan

Islam, like the other great religions, more particularly the other two semitic faiths, Judaism and Christianity, with whom it has much in common, bases itself on revelation.

But there is a vital distinction. The Holy Quran is a record solely of the verbal revelations received by the Holy Prophet of Islam during a period of over twenty years. It is thus, according to Muslim belief, the Very Word of God. The Holy Prophet's own interpretation and exposition of the revelations are not set out in the Quran. These are contained in other collections.

The claim of the Quran is that it furnishes guidance on all fundamentals, whether matters of principle, practice or vital detail, for all time. It opens up vast fields for the pursuit of knowledge and research, but the question I desire to address myself to at the outset is to what extent does it bind and regulate and what does it leave free for the exercise of discretion, experiment, trial and error? I have deliberately avoided the use of the expression "reason" in this context, lest it should give rise to misunderstanding. For, according to the Quran, Reason governs both in the realm of pure faith and in the fields of discretion and experiment. The Quran invites mankind to faith *through* the exercise of reason. It is full of appeals, invitations, admonitions and exhortations to "consider," "ponder," "reflect," "understand." It repeatedly draws attention to the phenomena of nature and invites the "people of understanding and wisdom" to reflect upon the "signs" contained therein and to draw lessons from them. For instance, the Holy Prophet was commanded and through him, of course, the Muslims:

Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the way that is best. Surely thy Lord knows best who has strayed from His path and He knows those who are rightly guided. (XVI.126)

The way to guidance is through wisdom and understanding:

God grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been granted abundant good; and none would be reminded save those endowed with understanding.

(II.270)

As an illustrations of these admonitions and exhortations let me draw attention to the following:

And one of His Signs is **this, that He** has created mates for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that surely are signs for a people who will reflect. (XXX.22)

And among His Signs is **the creation** of the Heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colors. In that surely are signs for those who possess knowledge. (XXX.23)

And among His Signs is **your sleep** by night and day, and your seeking of His bounty. In that surely are signs for a people who hear. (XXX.24)

And one of His Signs is **this, that He** shows you the lightning as a source of fear and hope, and He sends down water from the sky, and quickens therewith the earth after its death. In that surely are signs for a people who understand. (XXX.25)

And again:

God it is who has subjected to you the oceans that ships may sail thereon by His command, and that you may seek his bounty, and that you may be grateful. And He has subjected to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth: all this is from Him. In that surely are signs for a people who reflect. (XIV.12-13)

This is a Book We have revealed to thee, full of blessings, that they may reflect over its verses and that those gifted with understanding may take heed. (XXVIII.30)

Instances could be multiplied, but these should suffice:

Thus the question I have posed is *not* what is governed and regulated by Revelation and what is left to Reason. The question is what is governed and regulated by Revelation (the truth of which Reason has affirmed) and what is left to discretion and experiment.

The Quran itself makes that distinction:

O children of Adam: if Messengers come to you from among yourselves, rehearsing My Signs unto you, then who so shall fear God and do good, on them shall come no fear nor shall they grieve. (VII.36)

On the other hand, there is the admonition:

Ye who believe do not enquire concerning matters on which directions given to you might prove burdensome to you . . . God has left them out. God is most Forgiving, Forbearing. A people before you asked about such things, but then they became disbelievers therein. (V.102-103)

Thus we have the truth emphasized that Divine guidance is always completely beneficent and must, therefore, be followed, but that we must not seek to restrict the sphere of speculation, discretion and experimentation.

In fundamentals the harm resulting from the adoption of an injurious or wrong course may be irremediable or very far-reaching. Concerning such matters guidance has been furnished in the Revelation. Even that guidance is not more rigid than is absolutely essential for the organization of human society on a beneficent pattern and for the regulation of human conduct in conformity with such a pattern. In most matters the ordinances of the *Shariat* possess the healthy quality of elasticity. It is the sophists and the jurists who have sought to make them unduly rigid. But outside these limits Muslims are not only left free to exercise their discretion and to apply the lessons of experience and observation, but are constantly and repeatedly exhorted to do so.

Take the important matter of what has come to be known as a Constitution, that is the fundamental law governing and regulating the political, executive, legislative, and judicial functions of the State. The Quran has laid down the fundamental principles with great emphasis, but has left it to the people concerned to make them effective in accordance with their own needs, requirements, limitations, and circumstances.

The fundamental principles are thus expressed:

God commands you that you entrust political authority to those who are best capable of discharging this trust and that when you are called upon to judge between the people you judge with justice and equity. Surely excellent is that with which God admonishes you. God is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.
(IV.59)

Several principles are clearly deducible from this emphatic injunction. First, that under God, sovereignty rests with the people. It is for the people to entrust various aspects of political authority into the hands of persons who are deemed most capable of carrying them into effect. Attention is thus drawn to the very important principle that the exercise

of the franchise and the performance of the functions of representation and of executive and judicial office are *all* in the nature of a sacred trust and must be approached and carried out in that spirit. This exhortation at once lifts politics from the arena of controversy, conflict and sordid manoeuvre into the exalted sphere of a moral and spiritual function. The proper exercise of the franchise is the key to the successful working of democracy. This is emphasized in mandatory language in the Quran.

Next, the independence and integrity of the judicial office is stressed. I have had occasion recently to put together my ideas on "The Concept of Justice in Islam" in an article. I need not enlarge upon the subject here.

The verse then goes on to caution the Muslims that they may be tempted from time to time to depart from these principles, but that they would do well always to adhere to them as "God's admonition furnishes the best guidance."

Finally, there is the warning that God is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. He is always on the watch. He hears the cry of the afflicted and the oppressed and watches the conduct of all His creatures. We must not expect to enjoy the benefits of a system we do not practice, nor can we hope to escape the consequences and penalties flowing from wrongdoing, especially in connection with the discharge of so sacred a trust as the benign and benevolent governance of His creatures and making provision for their true welfare and their constant progress and advancement.

In addition to laying down principles and furnishing guidance the Quran makes provision for the training of Muslims in the exercise of these functions. The Holy Prophet was exhorted to make his decisions after consultation with and seeking advice from representative Muslims.

It is by the great mercy of God that thou (i.e., the Prophet) art kind towards them, and if thou hadst been rough and hard-hearted they would surely have dispersed from around thee. So forbear and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in matters of administration; and when thou hast determined the matter, then put thy trust in God. Surely God loves those who put their trust in Him. (III.160)

Mutual consultation and advice is described in the Quran as a characteristic of the Muslims:

Those who harken to their Lord and observe Prayer, and whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation, and who spend out of

whatsoever We have provided for them. (XLII.39)

It was this system and this training which converted so many unlettered and untutored dwellers of the desert into such efficient executives and administrators in so short a time in the early years of Islam. Of much greater importance, however, than these fundamental principles of constitution, etc., is today the question: "What is the kind of society that Islam seeks to set up?"

The answer to the question I have just posed can run into great length. I shall confine myself to a brief outline for the benefit of the average Westerner. The scholar already knows a great deal more about these matters than I can lay pretension to. Our purpose in these discussions, I conceive, is not so much to stimulate scholarship and research as to promote better understanding of the values that, in the last resort, and particularly in a period of stresses and crises, are likely to influence the thought and conduct of the average person.

The central fundamental point or doctrine, if you prefer the expression, in Islam is the Unity of God. Everything else, as you say here, stems from that. God is One: He is also Unity. All else proceeds from Him and depends upon Him for support, sustenance, and advancement.

All mankind are His creatures and servants. Islam recognizes no kind of privilege based upon race, family, color, office, wealth, etc. The only badge of nobility, as it were, is the degree of righteousness of a person's life.

O mankind, We have created you from man and woman:

And We have made you peoples and tribes that you may recognize one another more easily. Verily, the most honorable among you in the sight of God, is he who is most righteous among you. Surely, God is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (XLIX.14)

There is a fundamental unity in the Universe, and all this stresses the control and power of God. (LVII.2-5)

Man and the Universe have been created with a purpose. (XLV.23 and XLVI.4)

The Quran stresses that man as such (not any particular man or group) is God's Viceregent upon earth. (II.30-31; VI.166)

The universe and all that is in it has been made subservient to man.
(XLV.13-14)

This opens out a vast field for research and the pursuit of knowledge, for the benefit of *all mankind*.

As Islam does not recognize any classes, nor any privilege based upon any class distinctions, its economic and social values are all designed to establish in practice the brotherhood of man on a basis of equality and dignity. In fact, mankind are warned that if they will not cultivate true love for each other and practice sincere brotherhood, they may be pushed to the "brink of a pit of fire."

Remember the favour of God which He bestowed upon you when you were enemies and He united your hearts in love, so that by His grace you became as brothers: and you were on the brink of a pit of fire and He saved you from it. Thus does God explain to you His Signs that you may be guided.
(II.104)

In the social sphere, Islam has sought to emphasize the spirit of brotherhood and equality by instituting and insisting upon simple standards and dispensing with formality and ceremonial.

Liquor and all intoxicants, as well as gambling, are prohibited and moderation is enjoined in the matter of food and drink. It is pointed out that the use of intoxicants and indulgence in gambling would foster enmity and hatred and neglect of prayer and remembrance of God.
(V.91-92)

Eat and drink and be moderate, He loves not the immoderate.
(VII.32)

The Muslims in their "golden age," if the use of the expression may be permitted, have not always adhered to the spirit of Islamic injunctions and teachings in this regard. Nevertheless, social intercourse in Islamic society has throughout been perfectly easy and free and a consciousness of brotherhood and equality has always been kept alive. The purely religious ordinances of Islam have largely helped to keep this consciousness alive. The five daily services in the Mosques, where no discrimination of any sort is permitted, for instance, by way of allotment of seats or pews and access is open to all alike, the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca where all pilgrims are uniformly clad in two simple white sheets, the annual fast extending over a month with its uniform discipline, all tend in the same direction.

It is perhaps in the economic sphere that in the present age the values sought to be inculcated by Islam would arouse the keenest interest.

Islam starts from the fundamental fact that the original sources of wealth, the earth and its capacities and treasures, the sun, moon, the stars, the atmosphere, clouds, rain, etc., are the gifts of God to all mankind and have been subordinated to man and subjected to his service. There can, therefore, be no property in them.

Wealth is produced by the application of knowledge and skill to, and the utilization of, these sources. This involves the use of skill, capital, and labor. The wealth produced in consequence is, therefore, divisible not only between skill, capital, and labor, but must also be shared by the community as a whole, as legatees of God's bounties which are the original sources of all wealth. This share of the community is recovered through a capital levy called the ZAKAT. The root of the word is ZAKKA, i.e., "he purified," or "he fostered." This levy has both characters. By separating the share of the community it purifies the rest and makes the rest lawful for division between skill, capital, and labor. The proceeds of this levy are to be devoted towards purposes designed to foster the welfare of the community; e.g., the relief of poverty and distress, the provision of public works for the benefit of the community at large, the maintenance of scholars and research workers and those who devote themselves to the service of man, the provision of capital for those who possess useful skills but lack the necessary capital to put them into practice, etc.

The Quran indicates the purposes of the *Zakat* in:

Take out of their wealth alms so that thou mayest through it purify them and foster their welfare. (IX.103)

The Prophet himself has indicated the character of the *Zakat* in the words:

An alms that is *levied* on the well-to-do and is *returned* to those in need.

It is a legal levy imposed by the State and is to be distinguished from public and private charity to which the Muslims are repeatedly and emphatically exhorted in the Quran.

With regard to the use and application of wealth, Islam aims at the widest possible distribution and constant circulation. The *Zakat* just referred to is one of the means of securing such distribution and circulation. The emphasis on public and private charity is another.

(IV.37-41; II.262-275)

But there are other ordinances designed with the same object.

Hoarding of wealth, *Kanz*, and holding back, *Bukhl*, are most severely condemned as heinous sins entailing the defeat of their own purpose and powerful penalties (IX.34-35; CIV; IV.37-38). The freest and widest application of wealth, talent, knowledge, etc. "in the way of God", i.e., in the service of man, are insisted upon as an indispensable means of promoting *falah*, i.e., individual and national prosperity.

Behold, you are those who are called upon to spend in the way of God, and of you there are some who hold back, but whoso holds back is being miserly only against his own self. God is Self-Sufficient, it is you who are needy. If you turn away, He will bring in your stead a people other than you. Then they will not be like you. (XLVII.39)

But extravagance is forbidden, for extravagance leads man into evil company and the misuse of God's bounties. (XVII.28) It is spending "in the way of God," to win God's favor, that is enjoined. Indeed it is pointed out that in the substance of the well to do the needy have a share to which they are entitled.

In their wealth was a share for those who could express their needs and those who could not. (LI.20)

So give to the kinsman his due and to the needy, and to the wayfarer. That is best for those who seek the favour of God. It is they who will prosper. (XXX.39)

Interest is prohibited: it restricts circulation, accumulates wealth in a few hands and fosters wars. (II.276-280)

Trade, commerce, partnership, joint stock companies, and other commercial ventures and activities are not restricted. The principle is that a person may invest his money in any legitimate venture which puts wealth into circulation, promotes employment, and fosters the welfare of the community. What is prohibited is a transaction the essence of which is that one person advances money or makes a loan in kind with a stipulation that he must receive a fixed return for the use of the money

or the commodity lent, irrespective of what may happen to the subject matter of the loan. So long as the transaction is one which is designed to foster the welfare of the community through the circulation of wealth and the promotion of industry or commerce, and the person participating in it by way of investing money (or goods as the case may be) accepts the risk of loss and becomes entitled also to share in the profits, there is no objection.

Another device aimed at breaking up accumulations of property or wealth and securing a wide distribution is the Islamic system of inheritance. While a person is alive and in good health, he may dispose of his property as he may choose, subject to the moral principles of charity and beneficence inculcated by Islam. His power of bequest, however, is strictly limited. He may by Will dispose of no more than a maximum of one-third of his property and may direct its distribution for charity or otherwise through testamentary disposition. The remaining two-thirds or a larger share, after the testamentary dispositions have been satisfied, must be distributed among his heirs in specified shares. Under the Islamic law of inheritance, the number of heirs is apt to be quite numerous. Should a man die leaving him surviving father, mother, widow, sons and daughters, everyone of them would be an heir and would receive a prescribed share in the inheritance. Among the same category of heirs, there is no preference, nor is there any such discrimination as, for instance, the law of primogeniture. Men and women are all heirs, though for the reason to be stated immediately, a woman's share is generally one-half of a man's share in the same degree of heirs. The reason for this is that under the Islamic social and economic systems, the whole responsibility for the maintenance of the family rests upon the father and not upon the mother. Even should it happen, as is sometimes the case, that the mother has a larger income in her own right than the father, the legal responsibility for the maintenance of the family rests upon the father. The mother is under no legal obligation to make any contribution towards the family expenses.

The Islamic system of inheritance thus breaks up wealth in each generation. The object is that a large number should receive a small competence rather than that a single heir, or a small number, should inherit wealth in large quantities. It does not, however, follow that small parcels of land or real estate must be divided between all the heirs. The State is free to make any regulation which would restrict the subdivision of property through inheritance while safeguarding the legal title of each heir to receive his or her share in cash or in some other form.

Islam recognizes individual ownership and private property and gives it full legal protection. It does not *restrict* wealth, but regulates the modes of its acquisition and the purposes to which it must or may be applied.

In other words, it recognizes a certain *degree* of ownership in the individual. It permits its use and enjoyment *within certain limits*. It makes ownership a sort of stewardship to be administered and discharged as a trust.

Each one of you is a steward (lit.: a shepherd) and is accountable for his charge. (The Prophet)

Islam recognizes and indeed stresses the diversity of talents, skills, initiative, enterprise, etc. and consequently of earnings and rewards and a *disparity* of wealth and worldly means. (XVI.72) In fact, a certain diversity is part of the purpose of life. Like all other limitations and qualifications Islam seeks to employ this diversity for the purpose of promoting social co-operation on a beneficent basis.

Co-operate with each other in virtue and righteousness and do not co-operate in sin and transgression and fear God. Verily God is severe in chastisement.

It is through such co-operation and not through *coveting* what others excel in, that healthy progress is to be achieved. (IV.33)

Islam takes note of and encourages the spirit of competition but seeks to divert it into wholly beneficent channels:

Everyone has a goal which dominates him: Vie then, with one another in good deeds. (II.149)

UNDERSTANDING THE ISLAMIC PRINCIPLE OF SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD

Mohammad Abdul Ghaffar, Los Angeles, USA

To me, one of the all-encompassing and singularly unique beauties of Islam is that it presents the everyday pursuits of life; marriage and family, honest work, kindness, humility and grace - all of these facets of our lives and many more - as the vehicles by which we can elevate ourselves spiritually. Righteous living, in accordance with God's laws, becomes the means through which we attain blessings from Allah and peace within this life. The key that unlocks this door of blessings and peace is to be found only in our complete and uncompromising submission to the Will of Allah.

As a Westerner raised in a culture that prides itself on its love for, and defense of, freedom. I had a very difficult time understanding the true nature of the Islamic concept of one's complete submission to the Will of God. To many in the West, this phrase brings up connotations of being enslaved or dominated, of being forced to submit¹. The sense of apprehension that many of us feel concerning this concept is largely due to these negative associations we have with the word "submit". It is indeed ironic and unfortunate that the common definition of Islam as the religion of complete submission to the Will of God is the very definition that often drives people away from even considering Islam as a viable and rewarding path to spiritual salvation.

I know that this was the case with me years ago when I first read about Islam. It took a serious and extensive study of Ahmadiyyat and its representation of true Islam for me to see the error of my prior attitudes. But even after accepting Islam as my faith, I was still troubled by my inability to comprehend what I knew must be an inherently loving and merciful explanation of the idea of complete submission to the Will of Allah. Being able to correctly explain this idea is vital, especially when conveying the message of Islam to others.

The key to explaining and more fully understanding the concept of submission to Allah's Will lies in not trying to explain submission in an Islamic context. Rather, all that one needs to do is explain what God's Will is for us, namely, that Allah's Will, or desire, for mankind is to better ourselves physically, socially, morally and spiritually so that

¹ This feeling, ironically, seems more a reflection of America's guilty conscience in the light of her own misdeeds and immoral conduct with regard to its own peoples, other nations and other peoples (e.g. slavery, Native American genocide, Third World colonialism and capitalist imperialism, etc.)

we may, as individuals and as nations, become righteous and draw nearer to God. When viewed in this light, submission to the Will of Allah clearly means following His Divine guidance as revealed to Hadhrat Muhammad^{sa}, the holy prophet of Islam, and as it is contained in the holy Qur'an, the sole purpose of which is to facilitate mankind's spiritual upliftment and eternal salvation! When presented with these views, who would not, in all sincerity and urgency, want to submit completely to Allah's Will?

Allah desires for us to submit to His Will, not because He wants or needs to dominate us, but because submission, which is the ultimate manifestation of our humility, is the path of least resistance to Allah' desire to bring us in a state of communion with Him. Allah wants us to succeed in our struggle to elevate ourselves with our faith and prayers, our righteous actions and humble, God-fearing intentions. He wants us to choose the path that leads upward to Him, and to shun the path of succumbing to the various physical and mental intoxicants of the world and our lower desires. But, we still need to first make the choice and then the effort to bow down to Allah, both physically in **Salat** (ritualistic prayer) and figuratively in our thoughts and actions, before we can begin to receive the rewards of true humility and submission to His Will.

One of the practices I have found that strengthens my sense of humility and closeness to Allah is to be thankful to Him for loving me. This acknowledgment also affirms my thankfulness to Allah for giving me life so that I may, ultimately, come to know Him. Being thankful for Allah's love can be something we overlook when thanking Him for the blessings He bestows upon us. But since all of our blessings are but manifestations of Allah's all-encompassing love for us, it becomes a sign of our humility to be genuinely thankful to Him for His love.

Moreover, the depth and sincerity of our submission to Allah can be measured by the increase in the bestowal of His blessings upon us. Since the degree to which have submitted to the Will of Allah is reflected in our level of humility. I have found it useful to compare the flow of Allah's blessings in our lives to the flow of electricity in a circuit. If we characterize our inability to fully submit to the Will of Allah as being like impedance to the flow of electricity, it follows that the more arrogant we are, the higher is the impedance to the flow of Allah's blessings, and therefore, the fewer number of blessings we will receive. In contrast, the more humble we are, the lower the impedance to the flow of Allah's blessings in our lives. To complete this analogy, it would be as though Allah's potential for bestowing blessings is like an unlimited supply of electricity. Now, all the people living in the world, by virtue of being alive, are "plugged in" to this power supply. But, like most electrical appliances, just because something is plugged in does not mean that it is going to function. It could be broken, or have crossed wires, or have its "ON/OFF" switch set to "OFF". To fully

utilize and receive the benefits of being plugged in to Allah, we must be in proper spiritual working order or receptivity, and then we have to push our "ON" buttons. Islam is our spiritual repair and maintenance guide, and our complete submission to the Will of Allah keeps our "ON/OFF" switch set to "ON" so that His blessings can flow into our lives.

In closing, may we always remember to be thankful to Allah for our blessings. May we all strive to reach higher toward Him, and may we all hold fast to His rope so that we may, as a natural consequence, be elevated in our spiritual journey toward Him. Allah is both the source and the destination, the Alpha and the Omega, the path and the end of the road. As the holy Qur'an tells us, there will always be in our lives challenges, trials, and hardships. They are the means by which Allah tests our faith and we forge our righteousness. And Islam is the method by which He redeems us and raises us in stages to our worldly and spiritual perfection. And by choosing to walk the path of those on whom Allah has indeed bestowed His blessings, we are starting and continuing the most important journey of our earthly lives: the journey toward our life with Allah, *insha'Allah*, in the next life. May our journey for us and our loved ones be a joyful challenge that we successfully complete in the full remembrance and worship of Almighty God.

THE CONCEPT OF *JIHAD* IN ISLAM

Ahsan M. Khan, Los Angeles, USA

*"Swords can win territories but not hearts,
force can bend heads but not minds."*

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad
Supreme head of the Worldwide
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

In the wake of serious global tribulations such as the continuing struggle in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the recent Persian Gulf War and its ongoing repercussions, and of course the merciless persecutions of many Muslims in Pakistan and many African nations, truly the religion of Islam finds itself netted in a peculiar situation where the menaces of sociopolitical greed and authoritarian ambition have single-handedly defined a religion which has nothing to do with the global problems we read about in the newspapers.

The logic behind Islamic world-view is being overshadowed by Western misconceptions that spring forth from the occurrence of violence in various Islamic countries. This violence is instigated for the most part by either non-Muslims or localized Muslim regimes that represent little if anything of Islam in its purest practice.

In particular, the Islamic concept of *jihad* has been stretched ridiculously far beyond its true definition, mainly by the Western media and misguided fundamentalist Muslims. These misinterpretations and erroneous judgments will be examined shortly, but in order to get a grasp of the concept of *jihad* in Islam, it is logical to first study the holy Qur'an, the holy scripture of Islam.

When we closely examine the holy Qur'an, we find that it succinctly explains the very essence of *jihad*. The most comprehensive and insightful definition of the word can be found in Chapter 22, Al-Hajj. Allah says:

Permission to *fight* is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged.

(Qur'an, 22:40)

Regarding this verse, the supreme head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad ^{ay}, in his Friday sermon dated January 18, 1991, commented,

Those people are granted permission to raise their sword against those who are engaged in fighting against them.

They can raise their swords only against those who first commended hostilities against them, not because of any justifiable cause but because they are oppressed and have been wronged.

In other words, *jihad*, when taken to mean a physical war, is strictly a defensive means of protecting one's faith, **not** an offensive attack on someone justified by faith or doctrine.

Actually, the great and real *jihad* is to preach and propagate the message of Allah, as the Qur'an states:

So obey not the disbelievers and strive against them by means of it (the Qur'an) a great striving.

(Qur'an, 25:53)

The word *jihad* means "striving," as alluded to in the above verse. It is from this verse that the idea of *jihad* being a striving in the cause of Allah is derived. Muslims are forever enjoined to peacefully preach the Word of God to fellow humans and disseminate the teachings of the Qur'an to all of mankind. This is the true *jihad* that the holy prophet Muhammad^{sa} waged during his time. The *jihad* of the sword that is so eagerly emphasized by Western critics was simply a **defense** strategy employed by the prophet Muhammad^{sa} so as to maintain the honor of the religion he was spreading. It is truly unfortunate that critics fail to recognize the fact that the principal *jihad* fought 1400 years ago by the holy prophet of Islam^{sa}, and which continues to be fought today, was the unceasing fight against darkness and falsehood via peaceful means.

The law of religious wars is laid down clearly in the holy Qur'an. Allah says:

And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors.

(Qur'an, 2:191)

From this verse, we learn that the philosophy of *jihad* outlines strict provisions with regard to attacks against a tribe or country. In the light of the above verse, the second successor to the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, (Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}), Hadhrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad^{ra} said:

The purpose of religious wars is to protect religion, to protect every religion, and to save from disgrace and destruction all places of worship, irrespective of the denomination to which they belong. Only such a religious war is permitted in Islam.
(*Invitation to Ahmadiyyat*, p. 56).

Among Muslims, the misuse of this type of defensive attack has contributed much to the wrongful violence that has occurred recently in the Middle East.

A Western historian and theologian by the name of Wilfred Cantwell Smith was famous for offering his view on the concept of *jihad* by professing that "Muhammad preached Islam with a sword in one hand and the Qur'an in the other." Little do Smith and the other so-called scholars realize that they are only half correct, for the true *jihad* is waged with the Qur'an, not the sword. Muslims believe that the Qur'an, being the Word of God, stands alone as the one true power that can extinguish any attacks on Islam. Of course this is not to say that a war, labeled *jihad*, in which a Muslim fights in defense of his own religion and for the preservation of his human and religious rights, is un-Islamic, for this indeed is a form of *jihad* and one who is killed in such a battle, according to the holy prophet Muhammad^{sa}, is designated a martyr.

Coming back to the definition of *jihad*: Jihad is of two kinds, both of which represent the pure Islamic connotation of the word as laid down by Allah in the Holy Qur'an. These two kinds of *jihad* are (1) *jihad* against one's own evil inclinations (against Satan), and (2) fighting in self-defense or against the enemies of the truth. The second form of *jihad*, which is often misinterpreted and consequently misused by the so-called Muslims, was referred to by the holy prophet Muhammad^{sa} as the smaller *jihad*, while the greater *jihad* was waging war against one's self. It must also be pointed out that the first connotation of *jihad* mentioned above also incorporates propagation of the truth.

As mentioned earlier, *sura* Al-Hajj in the holy Qur'an provides much of the insight we need in understanding the concept of *jihad*. The above analysis of the two types of *jihad* is actually derived from verse 79 of Al-Hajj.

"And strive in the cause of Allah as it behoves you to strive for it Therefore, observe Prayer and pay the Zakat and hold fast to Allah. He is your Protector: an Excellent Protector and Excellent Helper."

Allah also mentions the grounds for waging a *jihad*, i.e. who exactly can carry out *jihad* (a defensive struggle) in order to uphold the freedom to practice their own faith:

Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly, only they said, 'Our Lord is Allah' -- And if Allah did not repel some people by means of others, there would surely have been destroyed cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the

name of Allah if oft commemorated. And Allah will surely help one who helps Him. Allah is indeed Powerful, Mighty.
(Qur'an, 22:41)

This particular verse implies that the object of *jihad* during the time of prophet Muhammad^{sa}, which also applies today, was not to deprive anyone of possession, freedom or life, but to defend and save Islam from extermination and to establish freedom of conscience. Also, it is conspicuously stated in the above verse - "Allah will surely help one who helps Him." But Allah, being Omnipotent, does not need the help of any man! The beauty in this line, as holds true for the entire Qur'an, lies in the fact that from such a statement one can grasp the true meaning behind a concept. "Helping God" does not suggest a literal helping, but instead means providing for and protecting one's own spirit and soul from outside religious attack. Thus, Allah says that He will surely come to the help of one who is willing to fight in defense to protect his faith and his right to propagate God's word to others. It is within this intricate notion that the beauty of the concept of *jihad* stands out.

Yet another angle from which *jihad* can be looked at is also mentioned in the holy Qur'an, thus:

And as for those who strive in Our path--We will surely guide them in Our ways. And verily, Allah is with those who do good.
(Qur'an, 29:70)

This verse gives the essence of *jihad* as suggested in Islam. *Jihad* doesn't consist of unnecessary bloodshed and violence but rather in striving hard to win the pleasure of Allah. And the strongest way to win this pleasure as a human being is to follow a divine reformer who represents God's guidance in its truest essence. Thus, to serve the cause of truth under the guidance of a holy prophet is a form of *jihad*. And again, this ties into the idea of preaching Islam or defending it via a physical battle.

All of these various connotations of *jihad* as laid down in the holy Qur'an stand alone as a strong and logical response to the attacks of critics and self-proclaimed theological scholars. As mentioned at the outset, many people in the world today unfortunately tend to look at *jihad* in a negative light and then associate this misconception with their perception of the religion of Islam in general. A prime example is the absurd connection that people make between terrorism and *jihad* or what people have termed "Islamic terrorism." Hadhrat Mirza Tahir

Ahmad^{ay} beautifully refutes these claims in his book *Murder in the Name of Allah*, in which he states:

Islam is as closely related to terrorism as light is to darkness or life is to death or peace is to war. They do come into contact with each other, of course, but from directions diametrically opposed. They are found grappling with each other but never walking hand in hand happily together (p. 104).

He further notes that terrorism is strictly political in nature and it is truly a misfortune that religion is inevitably brought into the picture when such ambitiously violent incidents take place. He states:

I am fully convinced that almost every form of communal violence witnessed in the world today, wherever that is and whatever cloak it wears, is essentially political in nature. Religion is not the exploiter; it is itself exploited by internal or external political interests (ibid).

So, in actuality, Islamic terrorism is nothing more than political mayhem working behind an Islamic facade. In other words, the concepts of *jihad* persisting today are nothing more than misconceptions stemming from the "Islamization" of terrorist acts. The concept of *jihad* is a beautiful and logical aspect of Islam that serves the single purpose of maintaining the vitality of Allah's teachings. To wage a "war" of such a kind is actually to preserve the sanctity of the beautiful teachings of the Qur'an, and furthermore to propagate Allah's word to others. And because the various levels of definition found in the word *jihad* are inextricably intertwined, it can be justifiably argued that to dispel misconceptions about the concept of *jihad* is a form of *jihad* in itself.

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Conditions of *Bai'at* (Initiation)

in
The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam
by

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian
The Promised Messiah and Mahdi
(peace be upon him)



The initiate shall solemnly promise:

- I. That he/she shall abstain from *Shirk* (association of any partner with God) right up to the day of his/her death.
- II. That he/she shall keep away from falsehood, fornication, adultery, trespasses of the eye, debauchery, dissipation, cruelty, dishonesty, mischief and rebellion; and will not permit himself/herself to be carried away by passions, however strong they may be.
- III. That he/she shall regularly offer the five daily prayers in accordance with the commandments of God and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); and shall try his/her best to be regular in offering the Tahajud (pre-dawn supererogatory prayers) and invoking *Darood* (blessings) on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); that he/she shall make it his/her daily routine to ask forgiveness for his/her sins, to remember the bounties of God and to praise and glorify Him.
- IV. That under the impulse of any passions, he/she shall cause no harm whatsoever to the creatures of Allah in general, and Muslims in particular, neither by his/her tongue nor by his/her hands nor by any other means.
- V. That he/she shall remain faithful to God in all circumstances of life, in sorrow and happiness, adversity and prosperity, in felicity and trials; and shall in all conditions remain resigned to the decree of Allah and keep himself/herself ready to face all kinds of indignities and sufferings in His way and shall never turn away from it at the onslaught of any misfortune; on the contrary, he/she shall march forward.
- VI. That he/she shall refrain from following un-Islamic customs and lustful inclinations, and shall completely submit himself/herself to the authority of the Holy Quran; and shall make the Word of God and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) the guiding principles in every walk of his/her life.
- VII. That he/she shall entirely give up pride and vanity and shall pass all his/her life in humbleness, cheerfulness, forbearance and meekness.
- VIII. That he/she shall hold faith, the honor of faith, and the cause of Islam dearer to him/her than his/her life, wealth, honor, children and all other dear ones.
- IX. That he/she shall keep himself/herself occupied in the service of God's creatures for His sake only; and shall endeavor to benefit mankind to the best of his/her God-given abilities and powers.
- X. That he/she shall enter into a bond of brotherhood with this humble servant of God, pledging obedience to me in everything good, for the sake of Allah, and remain faithful to it till the day of his/her death; that he/she shall exert such a high devotion in the observance of this bond as is not to be found in any other worldly relationship and connections demanding devoted dutifulness.

(Translated from *Ishtehar Takmeel-e-Tabligh*, January 12, 1889)